Week Nine of the Russian Intervention in Syria: The Empire Strikes Back

By The Saker
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Considering the remarkable success of the Russian intervention in Syria, at least so far, it should not have come as a surprise that the AngloZionist Empire would strike back. The only question was how and when. We now know the answer to that question.

On November 24th the Turkish Airforce did something absolutely unprecedented in recent history: it deliberately shot down another country's military aircraft even though it was absolutely obvious that this aircraft presented no threat whatsoever to Turkey or the Turkish people. The Russian Internet is full of more or less official leaks about how this was done. According to these versions, the Turks maintained 12 F-16 on patrol along the border ready to attack, they were guided by AWACS aircraft and "covered" by USAF F-15s in case of an immediate Russian counter-attack. Maybe. Maybe not. But this hardly matters because what is absolutely undeniable is that the **USA and NATO immediately took "ownership" of this attack by giving their full support to Turkey**.

NATO went as far as to declare that it would send aircraft and ships to protect Turkey as if it had been Russia which had attacked Turkey. As for the USA, not only did it fully back Turkey, it now also categorically denies that there is any evidence that Turkey is purchasing Daesh oil. Finally, as was to be expected, the USA is now sending The Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group into the eastern Mediterranean, officially to strike Daesh but, in reality, to back Turkey and threaten Russia. Even the Germans are now sending their own aircraft, but with the specific orders not to share any info with the Russians.

Chart of SU-24M Flight Path Released by Russian Ministry of Defense. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

So what is really going on here?

Simple: the Empire correctly identified the weakness of the Russian force in Syria, and it decided to use Turkey to provide itself an element of plausible deniability. This attack is probably only the first step of a much larger campaign to "push back" Russia from the Turkish border. The next step, apparently, includes the dispatching of western forces into Syria, initially only as 'advisors', but eventually as special forces and forward air controllers.

The US and Turkish Air Forces will play the primary role here, with assorted Germans and UK aircraft providing enough diversity to speak of an "international coalition". As for the French, stuck between their Russian counterparts and their NATO "allies", they will remain as irrelevant as ever: Hollande caved in, again (what else?). Eventually, NATO will create a *de-facto* safe heaven for its "moderate terrorists" in northern Syria and use it as a base to direct an attack on Raqqa. Since any such intervention will be completely illegal, the argument of the need to defend the Turkmen minority will be used, R2P and all. The creation of a NATO-protected safe heaven for "moderate terrorists" could provide the first step for breaking up Syria into several smaller statelets.
If that is really the plan, then the shooting down of the SU-24 sends a powerful message to Russia: we are ready to risk a war to push you back – are you ready to go to war? The

painful answer will be No, Russia is not prepared to wage a war against the entire Empire over Syria, simply because she does not have the capabilities to do so.

As I have already mentioned many times now, Syria is beyond the Russian power projection capability (roughly 1000km), especially if that power projection has to be executed through hostile territory (which Turkey most definitely is). So far, the Russians have succeeded, brilliantly, in organizing and supporting their small force in Syria, but this in no way indicates a Russian capability to support a major air operation over Syria or, even less so, a ground operation.

The fact is that the Russian intervention in Syria was always a risky and difficult one, and it did not take the Empire much time to capitalize on this. I get a lot of flak from flag-wavers and "hurrah patriots" for saying this, but the fact is that Russia cannot 'protect' Syria from the US, NATO or even CENCTOM. At least not in purely military terms. This does not mean that Russia does not have retaliatory options. Russia has already engaged in the following:

Economic sanctions: Russia has declared a number of sanctions against Turkey, including the freezing of the Turkish Stream project. Furthermore, Russian tourism in Turkey – a huge source of revenue – is most likely to dwindle down to a tiny fraction of what it used to be: Russians will not be banned from going to Turkey, but no tours or packages will be offered by Russian travel agencies. Some Turkish goods will be banned in Russia, and Turks will not be invited to bid for various types of contracts. All in all, these sanctions will hurt Turkey, but not in a major way.

Political sanctions: here Russia will use one of her most terrifying weapons: the truth. The Russian military presented a devastating series of photos and videos shot by Russian air and space assets proving that Turkey does, indeed, purchase oil from Daesh. What was especially shocking about this evidence is that it showed the truly immense scale of the smuggling: one photo showed 1,722 oil trucks in in Deir Ez-Zor region while another one showed 8,500 oil tankers are used by Daesh to transport up 200,000 barrels of oil. What these figures mean is that not only is this smuggling organized at the level of the Turkish state, but it is also absolutely obvious that the USA knows everything about it.
Predictably, the western media made no mention of the actual evidence, it only spoke of "images the Russians claim to show", but the damage is still done, especially in the long term. Now everybody with a modicum of intelligence knows that Erdogan is a lying crook. More importantly, it has now become undeniable that Turkey is not only an ally, but a patron and sponsor of Daesh. Finally, in the light of this evidence, it also becomes rather obvious why Turkey decided to shoot down the Russian SU-24: because the Russians were bombing the Daesh to Turkey smuggling routes.

The final blow to the prestige and credibility of Erdogan and Turkey came from Vladimir Putin himself who, in his annual address to the Parliament said:

We know who are stuffing pockets in Turkey and letting terrorists prosper from the sale of oil they stole in Syria. The terrorists are using these receipts to recruit mercenaries, buy weapons and plan inhuman terrorist attacks against Russian citizens and against people in France, Lebanon, Mali and other states. We remember that the militants who operated

in the North Caucasus in the 1990s and 2000s found refuge and received moral and material assistance in Turkey. We still find them there.

Meanwhile, the Turkish people are kind, hardworking and talented. We have many good and reliable friends in Turkey. Allow me to emphasize that they should know that we do not equate them with the certain part of the current ruling establishment that is directly responsible for the deaths of our servicemen in Syria.

We will never forget their collusion with terrorists. We have always deemed betrayal the worst and most shameful thing to do, and that will never change. I would like them to remember this – those in Turkey who shot our pilots in the back, those hypocrites who tried to justify their actions and cover up for terrorists.

I don't even understand why they did it. Any issues they might have had, any problems, any disagreements we knew nothing about could have been settled in a different way. Plus, we were ready to cooperate with Turkey on all the most sensitive issues it had; we were willing to go further, where its allies refused to go. Allah only knows, I suppose, why they did it. And probably, Allah has decided to punish the ruling clique in Turkey by taking their mind and reason.

But, if they expected a nervous or hysterical reaction from us, if they wanted to see us become a danger to ourselves as much as to the world, they won't get it. They won't get any response meant for show or even for immediate political gain. They won't get it.

Our actions will always be guided primarily by responsibility – to ourselves, to our country, to our people. We are not going to rattle the sabre. But, if someone thinks they can commit a heinous war crime, kill our people and get away with it, suffering nothing but a ban on tomato imports, or a few restrictions in construction or other industries, they're delusional. We'll remind them of what they did, more than once. They'll regret it. We know what to do.

Of course, in a society thoroughly habituated to lying, dishonesty and hypocrisy, these are "only" words, and they shall be ignored. But in the Middle-East and the rest of the world, these are powerful words which the Turks will have a very hard time "washing off" from their reputation.

Military measures: these are limited, of course, but not irrelevant. First, Russia has now admitted that S-400 are now in Syria (I suspect they were there all along). Second, Russia has began building a 2nd air base, this time in Shaayrat, in central Syria. If this base is indeed built, then bringing in a few Russian AWACS and/or MiG-31s would make sense. Third, Russia will now use more modern SU-34s equipped with advanced air-to-air missiles in northern Syria and Russian strike aircraft will now be escorted by dedicated SU-30SM fighters. This combination of measures will make it much harder for the Turks to repeat such an attack, but I personally doubt that they have any such intentions, at least not in the immediate future.

Evaluation:

In order to fully understand what is happening now we need to look at the bigger picture. The first major consequence of the shooting down of the Russian SU-24 is that ***NATO has now become an impunity alliance***. Now that the precedent has been set by Turkey's

act of war against Russia, because that is what this shooting down undeniably was, any NATO member can now do the same thing while feeling protected by the alliance. If tomorrow, say, the Latvians decide to strafe a Russian Navy ship in the Baltic Sea or if the Poles shoot down a Russian aircraft over Kaliningrad, they will immediately get the 'protection' of NATO just like Turkey now did: the USA will fully endorse the Latvian/Polish version of the events, the Secretary General of NATO will offer to dispatch more forces to Latvia/Poland to "protect" these countries from any "threat" from "the east" and the world's corporate media will turn a blind eye to any evidence of Latvian/Polish aggression. This is an extremely dangerous development as it gives a strong incentive to any small country to deal with its inferiority complex by showing its "courage" and "determination" to challenge Russia even if, of course, this is done by hiding behind NATO's back.

NATO is also deliberately escalating its war on Russia by admitting Montenegro into the Alliance and by re-starting talks about admitting Georgia. In a purely military sense, the incorporation of Montenegro into NATO makes no difference whatsoever, but in political terms this is yet another way for the West to thumb its nose at Russia and say "see, we will even incorporate your historical allies into our Empire and there is nothing you can do about it". As for Georgia, the main purpose behind the discussion of its incorporation into NATO is to vindicate the "Saakashvili line", i.e. to reward aggression towards Russia. Here again, there is nothing Russia can do.

We thus are facing **an extremely dangerous situation:**

- The Russian forces in Syria are comparatively weak and isolated
- Turkey can, and will, continue its provocations under the cover of NATO
- The West is now preparing an (illegal) intervention inside Syria
- The western intervention will be made against Syria and Russia
- NATO politicians now have an easy way to score "patriotic" points by provoking Russia

If we strip all the NATO verbiage about "defending our members" what is happening now is that the Empire has now apparently decided that going down the road to war is safe because Russia will not dare to "start" a war. In other words, this is a game of chicken in which one side dares the other to do something about it. This is exactly what Putin was referring to when he said:

If they expected a nervous or hysterical reaction from us, if they wanted to see us become a danger to ourselves as much as to the world, they won't get it. They won't get any response meant for show or even for immediate political gain. They won't get it. Our actions will always be guided primarily by responsibility – to ourselves, to our country, to our people

What the imperial deep state is missing is the fact that *Russia might not have a choice but to confront the Empire*. Yes, the Russians do not want war, but the problem here is that, considering the absolutely reckless arrogance and imperial hubris of the western elites, ***every Russian effort to avoid war is interpreted by the western deep state as a sign of weakness***. In other words, ***by acting responsibly the Russians are now providing an incentive for the West to act even more irresponsibly***. This is a very, very, dangerous

dynamic which the Kremlin will have to deal with. Putin, apparently, does have something in mind, at least this is how I understand his warning:
But, if someone thinks they can commit a heinous war crime, kill our people and get away with it, suffering nothing but a ban on tomato imports, or a few restrictions in construction or other industries, they're delusional. We'll remind them of what they did, more than once. They'll regret it. We know what to do.

I have no idea as to what he might be referring to, but I am confident that this is not some empty bluster: this was not a threat to Russia's enemies, but a promise to the Russian people. I sure hope that there is a plan because right now we are on a collision course leading to war. In conclusion, here is a short quote by Putin western leaders might want to ponder:

http://www.globalresearch.ca/week-nine-of-the-russian-intervention-in-syria-the-empire-strikes-back/5494109